

3.6 Summary of Trucking Breakout Session

***Conference on Updating the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan
July 31 – August 1, 2000
New Orleans Marriott***

This document summarizes the items discussed during the Trucking Breakout Session held on July 31 and August 1, 2000. This Breakout Session, which was one of the six sessions held for the various transportation modes, served as an important component of the first *Conference on Updating the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan* held at the New Orleans Marriott.

The primary purpose of this Breakout Session was to 1) review and validate the trucking elements included in the 1996 *Louisiana Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan (SITP)* and related benchmarks included in *Louisiana: Vision 2020*, and 2) identify new or additional strategic issues for consideration in the Plan Update. The related *SITP* items are attached.

Approximately 20 persons attended the Breakout Session, including representatives of trucking companies, intermodal service providers, L DOTD, regional planners, and consultants.

Participants confirmed their support for inclusion of the related 1996 *SITP* elements in the Plan Update, with suggested updates and modifications. This Breakout Session addressed five related elements contained in the 1996 *SITP*, as well as several additional initiatives. Discussions on the 1996 *SITP* elements are summarized below.

T-1: Establish Regional Trucking Advisory Councils

- Regional Trucking Advisory Councils are active in most districts.
- The group recommended that motor carrier representatives be appointed on the Advisory Councils.
- The panel discussed Incident Management Improvements, primarily to have more advance notice of trip re-routing due to incidents.
- A Statewide Trucking Advisory Council was proposed to monitor, coordinate, and oversee the regional councils, and to forward statewide initiatives.

T-2: Develop one-stop State Truck Permitting / Processing Center

- A one-stop state trucking permitting/processing center has been established in Baton Rouge. The current facility is located in an existing building, and a new facility is being planned for future development, pending the availability of funding.
- Although there is a Center in place, a new Center was originally included in 1996 *SITP*, and is to be located in Baton Rouge.
- According to the panel, an additional Center in Caddo Parish on I-20 in northern Louisiana is also needed.

T-3: Establish commercial zones around ports

- Permitting for overloads within zones around ports has been implemented.
- The panel felt that the commercial zones around ports are working.

T-4: Automate weigh stations

- Two automated weigh stations are in service— near Greenwood on I-20, and near Breaux Bridge on I-10.
- Additional automated stations are being planned.
- The panel noted that automated weigh stations save time and are good for industry. They suggested that more automated stations are needed.

T-5: Pursue uniformity in permitting and enforcement of overweight and oversize vehicles

- Permitting is being pursued.
- Permitting uniformity is a growing concern. The chief challenge lies in the fact that weight standards vary by state. For this reason, 12 states in SASHTO plus Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Missouri have tentatively agreed to develop a uniform permitting process across the states.
- The group suggested using SASHTO as a means for furthering this initiative.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

Utilize Existing Infrastructure

The panel discussed developing innovative time-of-day strategies to utilize excess capacity during off-peak periods, creating additional capacity during peak periods. In general, intermodal facilities (rail and port) allow for truck pickup and deliveries during business hours (8 AM – 5 PM) only, thereby confining intermodal truck trips to peak daytime hours and increasing congestion on main urban routes. One solution is to provide incentives for intermodal operators to operate 24 hours/7 days (or 12-18 hours), allowing truckers access to the facilities during off-peak periods. This proposal may lead to a broader distribution of truck trips, decreasing peak congestion on major urban roads.

This proposal dovetails off the I6 element, which relates to intermodal-related economic development. This element should, in effect, be broadened to offer incentives for intermodal facilities, as well as other truck generators such as industry and distribution facilities. Extending the gate hours at these facilities offers greater flexibility in trip making for trucks.

Truck Stop Design Standards

It was reported that a significant number of truck stops are difficult to egress and ingress by combination trucks. In many cases, the turning radii are too tight for combination vehicles. It was proposed that a manual with minimum design standards be developed.

Freight Representation in MPO Planning Process

It was proposed that a Freight Advisory Committee be developed by each MPO in the State, much like the committee present in the New Orleans MPO. The committee should include representation from, but not limited to, the following: LDOTD, truckers, rail carriers, airports, airlines, ports, industry/commerce representatives, and the Department of Economic Development.